

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action indicates that some of the Information Disclosure Statements filed in this application are missing from the Patent Office file. Accordingly, applicant includes herewith a copy of the supplemental Information Disclosures filed August 1, 2003, December 23, 2003, and January 9, 2004. Included with each Information Disclosure Statement is a copy of the stamped postcard indicating receipt by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Also included are copies of all of the non-U.S. references included with such previously filed Information Disclosure Statements. Applicant understands that the Information Disclosure Statement filed with the original application has been considered, as a copy of the PTO-1449 accompanying such originally-filed Information Disclosure Statement is included with the Official Action.

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 13-15, and 17 under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by YUZAWA. The Official Action also rejects claims 8 and 9 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over YUZAWA in view of DUTTA.

The Official Action explicitly states, however, that claims 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 16, 18, and 19 are allowable but for their dependence from rejected base claims.

In light of such stated allowability, applicant has amended the allowable claims into independent form. Specifically, applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of allowable claim 3, and has canceled claim 3. Applicant has amended allowable claim 5 into independent form by incorporating the features of original claims 1 and 4. Claims 7, 11, and 12 are each now in independent form through amendment to include the features of original claim 1. As to the method claims, applicant has amended independent claim 14 by incorporating the features of allowable claim 16, together with the cancellation of claim 16. Applicant has amended claim 18 into independent form by incorporating the features of original claims 14 and 17. Finally, applicant has amended allowable claim 19 into independent form by incorporating the features of original independent claim 14.

In light of the amendments discussed above and the stated allowability of the claims now in independent form, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

Please charge the fee of \$430 for the five extra independent claims added herewith, to Deposit Account No. 25-0120.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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